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Outside the Armory Show 2007

Fair Report: The Good, the Bad and the Armory  
by ArtInfo.com

NEW YORK, Feb. 28, 2007—As ArtInfo sat back to assess The Armory Show and all the simultaneous fairs, we asked our team of reporters to send us a few informal impressions of the whirlwind of art that passed through town last week. Weighing the good and the bad, we compiled a list of things we liked—and things we didn't—and found a fairly solid balance of the two.

## Good:

The sheer number of fairs, events and activities to choose from. With seven fairs, and countless openings, parties, lectures and panels, this year's Armory week offered something to suit any interest.

## Bad:

The sheer number of fairs, events and activities to choose from. There were so many things going on, it was simply impossible to do everything. Attending one fabulous party left a person wondering about another they were missing across town. And even if one spent several hours every day at the fairs, there was no way to take it all in during five short days.

## Good:

Hanging out with Ann Hamilton and Joan Simon during their book signing at The Armory Show on Saturday afternoon and meeting the string of curators (including Judith Tannenbaum from the RISD Museum), book people (such as publisher Gregory Miller) and artists (including Betty Woodman), who were there to show their friendship and support. While cynicism is fashionable, it reminded us what a unique, mutually supportive place the New York art world can be.



Pulse New York, 2007



Pulse New York, 2007



Works by Zhang Dali  
at Chinese Contemporary's Scope booth

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## Bad:

The Scope tent, which had worked so well in Miami in December. Its site, tucked away around the back of Lincoln Center, was a disappointment. And inside, it felt like, well, a tent. Not really conducive to serious art looking at all.

## Good:

Catching up with dealers from out of town and getting updates on forthcoming projects. For example, Pulse exhibitor Catharine Clark is slated to move her San Francisco gallery a few blocks to 150 Minna St. in May, while dealer Helmut Schuster has been busy prepping his new Berlin space (near the Hamburger Bahnhof and directly next to a future Haunch of Venison outpost) for its March 17th opening.

## Bad:

The nagging sense that one is missing something. While we discovered a number of emerging artists at the fairs, we're certain that months from now, we will be taken by the work of a young artist or two—only to find out that our over-stimulated eyes passed right over them this week.

## Good:

The Armory Show's consolidated Pier 94 venue. It was a big improvement over Pier 92—some readers will remember the lights going out last year. All around, it just seemed more posh.

## Bad:

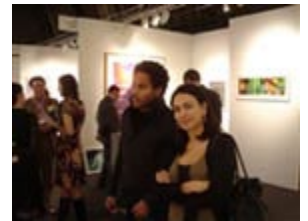
Galleries using gimmicky tactics to get attention. One gallery, for example, had shiny paper strewn all over the floor of their booth at The Armory Show—was this supposed to be an artwork?

## Good:

The quality of the video work at the fairs—and the attention that it was getting. Not just down at DiVA, which included excellent pieces by Yasmine Chatila and Hans Op de Beeck, but in the other fairs at well. From The Armory Show itself,



Steve Gagnon's "Around the World in a N.Y.C. Taxi" at Fountain



Lenny Kravitz in the aisles at Pulse



Armory Show press conference



Video still from "All together now ..." (2005) Hans Op de Beeck; at the DiVA Ronmandos Gallery booth

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where a couple of stunning Bill Violas were stopping people in their tracks, to the Red Dot fair, where Jenkins Johnson had Gerald Forster's seductive little things, Repetti Gallery had a lovely piece by Derick Melander and Nancy Hofmann had some very impressive work by Asya Reznikov.

Bad:

The number of artists, and their dealers, who—at all price points, and in all the fairs—are once again resorting to peddling what is effectively soft porn.

Good:

The amazing good humor shown by people who were having to stand in line for more than two hours to get into The Armory Show on Saturday afternoon. So far as most of them seemed to be concerned, the line was part of the experience.

Bad:

The fact that most of the shuttle services to get people from the Eighth Avenue subway to the Armory Show, or from one fair to another didn't start running until 3 p.m. What's that about? Are we to assume that if you're keen enough to get to the fairs when they open, you probably have money for a taxi?

And a Few Moments to Remember:

Seeing Vito Acconci, eager as a young architecture student, minding his own business and taking photographs of the bookstore that he had designed for D.A.P.

Bumping into Lenny Kravitz at the Pulse preview, spotting Glenn Close at The Armory Show, running into Sofia Coppola (or a passable imposter) on the way to the V.I.P. Lounge and seeing many other celebrities from outside the art world show up to take in the spectacle.

Mayor Bloomberg's expression when, during his press conference immediately prior to the Armory Show preview, he was asked his views on Britney Spears' new look.

The number of art-world professionals that we ran into at one fair or another, who would explain, "Oh, I'm not working today, I just came because I wanted to see the art." The week certainly made one wonder if any of us are ever—really—off the clock.

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